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SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA PREPARED TO RESETTLE EIGHT CUBAN MIGRANTS

REF: A. STATE 023443

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Classified By: Ambassador Vincent Obsitnik for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) The Director of Slovakia's Ministry of Interior (MOI) Office of Migration, Bernard Prielcel, confirmed to Poloff on April 7 that Slovakia will take steps within the next month to resettle eight Cuban refugees currently living at Guantanamo. The GOS accepts USG offers to provide for transportation of GOS officials to Guantanamo for the purpose of carrying out screening interviews, and to provide support to resettled persons for six months through the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Prielcel and local IOM representative Zuzana Vatralkova will work with IOM Washington and the Embassy to coordinate a Guantanamo visit by Mr. Prielcel and one of his advisors. MOI Legal Advisor Anna Sidova said that Slovakia will offer asylum to the eight applicants when they reach Slovak soil. Asylum was chosen as the preferred resettlement method because it allows the government to provide further assistance and facilitates possible family reunification in the future. Prielcel said that Prime Minister Fico personally approved the resettlement plan earlier this year.

[1](#)2. (C) Prielcel would like to visit Guantanamo soon; he responded favorably to our follow-up suggestion that he could visit the week of April 28 or May 7. IOM has thus far not settled on a preferred date. Prielcel hopes to pre-select during the visit applicants for asylum, giving preference to professionals and persons with families. (In 2007, Slovakia offered to resettle two families containing eight persons total, as per ref tel C. MOI is aware, however, that there may not be any full families available and they will be selecting mostly, if not entirely, males without accompanying families.) Prielcel has some concerns about the available applicants and has requested to see all 30-plus bios before traveling; we have agreed to provide these. Since Prielcel and staff speak limited English and no Spanish, he requested that Ms. Vatralkova join the delegation. We did not agree on this point since IOM has staff at Guantanamo. Prielcel was not enthusiastic about the idea of having someone accompany from the Slovak embassy in Washington.

[1](#)3. (C) While the Ministry of Interior has committed to moving forward on resettlement, it would like to keep the circle of people aware of the plan as small as possible: the Ministry, the U.S. government, and IOM. They do not want any media coverage of activities and have not informed local stakeholders (such as UNCHR and community service organizations that work with refugees) about their plans.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also been kept mostly out of the loop. Comment: We infer that the desire to limit the dissemination of information regarding the plan stems from the government's reluctance to provoke the Cuban Government, with which it seeks to strengthen ties. This approach raises potential questions about how assistance programs will be carried out after the six-month window elapses, but must be preserved in the short run so that the government feels comfortable and moves forward. Thus, the USG should seek strong assurances regarding future assistance for the resettled individuals.

OBSITNIK